

THE IRISH FORESTER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY OF IRISH FORESTERS



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Continued Uncertainty

Four months after the publication of the book of estimates for 2003 and the subsequent budgetary cutbacks, there is continued uncertainty as to what the prospects are for forestry and foresters in the short to medium term.

Already we know that the afforestation programme for this year has been curtailed and a number of grant schemes have been withdrawn (woodland improvement, reconstitution, roads). We also know that support for forestry agencies (training, research and promotion) and forestry organisations has been cut dramatically. In many cases core funding support has been completely withdrawn and the Society is one such victim. Neither are there any clear indications as to what forestry funding will be available in 2004 or indeed for the remainder of the National Development Plan until 2006. Likewise, the current "stop-go" approach being adopted *vis-à-vis* afforestation grant approvals is not sustainable in the medium to long term.

Uncertainty is draining confidence from the forestry sector and it would be naïve of foresters to think that the profession can survive the year without serious job losses. The current commitment to 10,000 ha. of afforestation per year, half of the stated target in the now obsolete strategic plan, does not take into account the fact that the annual forest premium bill is rising each year, inevitably leading to a smaller budget for afforestation. It is rather difficult for foresters to plan for the future in that surreal scenario!

Of course, the recent cutbacks are not the only constraint impinging on forestry at present. There are potentially 26 indicative forest strategies currently under preparation, one for each county in the Republic. A new set of rules at county level, overlaid on top of the existing strict national guidelines, standards and procedures, can hardly expect a warm welcome from foresters. Hardly a month passes without a further threat to forestry development, the latest being an initiative to protect hen harrier habitats in an area in the south-west by banning new planting, despite well documented evidence that hen harrier populations increase in areas of young forests.

On a national level, the issue of insurance has reached crisis levels as individuals and businesses, whether contracting or consulting, are being put under considerable financial pressure by inexplicable increases in premiums. This problem is not unique to forestry and it is now time for the government to address this issue with immediate effect.

SIF Website

The Society has launched its website which can be accessed at www.societyofirishforesters.ie. Paula Lahiff, our administrator in the Sligo office has been trained in its management and so it is kept up to date with the latest SIF news and information. The site can be used to access old and current editions of the newsletter *The Irish Forester* and abstracts from the journal *Irish Forestry*. The site also contains .pdf versions of our policy position statements and code of ethics and professional conduct. There is a useful search facility that can be used to search for key words or authors of previously published papers in the journal *Irish Forestry*.



The Society of Irish Foresters Homepage

SIF Annual Symposium on Continuous Cover Forestry

The Society's Annual Symposium will address the topic of Continuous Cover Forestry on May 2nd this year at the Stand Hotel, the Curragh, Co. Kildare. This follows the very popular field day held on this topic in Portumna in 2002 and members demand for more discussion of alternative silvicultural systems. An interesting range of speakers will address the symposium and these will be as follows:

Prof. Hans Otto (Germany) - "*Site Knowledge and Site Mapping as a Fundamental Basis for Species Choice and Silvicultural Strategies*".

Prof. Jurgen Huss (Germany) - *"Two-storeyed forests or the benefits of nurse crops"*.

Morgan Roche (Pro Silva Ireland) - *"Constraints to Continuous Cover Forestry in Ireland"*.

Dr. Aine Ni Dhubhain (UCD Forestry) - *"Continuous Cover Forestry Definitions and Systems and Current Irish Research"*

John Murphy (Coillte) - *"Continuous Cover Forestry - Coillte Policy and Practice"*

This promises to be a fascinating day and members are encouraged to book early to ensure that they can be accommodated. The fee for the full day symposium, including lunch, will be EUR 55. A separate notice and registration form for this event will be circulated to all members.

The Society of Irish Foresters would like to acknowledge the assistance of Pro Silva Ireland in organising this event.

Recent Meetings Attended by the Technical Director

Recent meetings attended by the Technical Director include ones with:

- The Irish Forest Industry Chain (IFIC) - Forest Service Budget Cuts - Dublin
- ICOS - Sligo
- Public Meeting on Acid Sensitive Waters - Ballybofey
- COFORD - Forest Certification Audit Protocol
- Irish Forestry Certification Initiative (IFCI) - Tullamore
- Irish Timber Growers Association (ITGA) Seminar - Dublin
- SIF Strategy Review - Kildare
- Forest Service - Mid Term Review of REPS - Portlaoise
- SIF Council Meeting - Dublin
- Consultants Regional Group - Portlaoise
- Forest Stewardship Council Contact - Tullamore
- Insurance Company representatives - Portlaoise

Ancient Woodland Inventory for Northern Ireland

The Woodland Trust in association with the Geography Department in Queen's University Belfast have launched a major new initiative to compile a complete record of ancient woodlands in Northern Ireland. This project will take three years to complete and is being funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Environment and Heritage Service. The Ancient Woodlands Inventory will identify all ancient woodland (land that has been continuously wooded since at least 1600 AD and often for much, much longer) and long established woodland (land wooded since 1830 AD) in Northern Ireland. It will also assess how much has been lost in recent years and why.

When completed, the inventory will be made available in different formats, catering for a broad range of audiences from the general public to professionals and academics.

Full information in digitized form will be accessible via the Woodland Trust's website.

SIF Host Two Foreign Groups in 2003

The Society of Irish Foresters will host two separate parties of foreign visitors to Ireland this year. In May the SIF will host the council meeting of the Union of European Foresters to which the SIF was formally admitted as a full member in Poznan, Poland, last October. In September, the Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF) will visit Ireland on a study tour of our forests. Any Society member interested in joining these groups or in assisting with hosting should contact the Sligo office for further details.

Forest Recreational Guidelines

The Forest Service is currently preparing Forest Recreational Guidelines to join the suite of existing Forest Service Guidelines. It is expected that a draft copy will be circulated for consultation before the summer. In the meantime, any queries should be addressed to Kevin Collins in the Forest Service.

COFORD Broadleaves Seminar

COFORD is hosting the second in a series of two-day events on growing and managing broadleaved trees and utilising hardwood timber in Ireland. The seminar will be held on 10 and 11 April 2003, at the Hotel Kilkenny, College Road, Kilkenny. The programme for Thursday, 10 April 2003, includes:

- *The national and local broadleaf resource*, by Niall Farrelly, Forest Service.
- *Growing broadleaves - from the grower's point of view*, by Michael Gabbett, Grower
- *The UK experience with the production of quality broadleaves, with the main emphasis on continuous cover forestry*, by Dr Peter Savill, Oxford.
- *Broadleaves and their management*, by Michael Bulfin, Teagasc.

After an early lunch, buses will depart for a field visit to the plantation of Mr T. Mullins, at Castlefield, Dungarvan, Co Kilkenny, to view pure stands of sycamore, ash and oak. The programme for Friday, 11 April 2003, includes:

- *An overview of hardwood utilisation in Ireland*, by Gordon Knaggs, Gordon Knaggs and Associates.
- *Making the grade - appearances matter*, by Kevin Maye, University of Limerick.
- *Processing the hardwood resource*, by Seamus Heaney, Coillte.
- *The joinery sector and its material requirements*, by Pat Phelan, Kingsriver Furniture.

After lunch, buses will depart for a visit to Kingsriver Furniture where Pat Phelan will show the processing of hardwoods from sawlog to fine furniture. Attendance at the conference (including refreshments and lunches) costs €35 per person. Further information and a registration

form is available at the COFORD website: <http://www.coford.ie/newsandevents/kilkenny.pdf>.

Registration forms should be completed and returned to COFORD before 1 April 2003. Alternatively, email info@coford.ie or telephone 01-7167700 to secure your place.

Broadleaf Seminar in Northern Ireland

The Forest Service in Northern Ireland, in conjunction with COFORD and the Institute of Chartered Foresters, will hold a two-day event in Co Down on 8 and 9 May 2003 entitled *Managing Broadleaves to Produce Quality Hardwood Timber*. The event will include visiting broadleaf woodland at various stages of maturity, practical guidance on measuring and grading hardwood timber and a visit to a hardwood saw mill.

IFCI AGM

The Irish Forestry Certification Initiative (IFCI) is working towards the development of a certifiable forest management standard for Irish forests based upon the principles and criteria of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). The AGM of the IFCI will take place on March 29th 2003 at the Tullamore Dew Heritage Centre, Tullamore, Co. Offaly at 11.30 am. IFCI is open to membership from companies, individuals and organisations that have an interest in the development of an FSC Irish standard. The AGM is open to members only but membership is available on the day of the meeting.

Dates For Your Diary

DATE	EVENT & VENUE
March 25	Field Day in Association with ITGA Mallow, Co. Cork.
May 2	Annual Symposium Continuous Cover Forestry Stand Hotel, Curragh, Co. Kildare
May 2	Annual General Meeting Following Annual Symposium
May 15-17	SIF Hosts Union of European Foresters Council Meeting
May 23	Field Day BOGFOR Project, Midlands
June 27	Field Day Castlewellan Forest Park, Castlewellan, Co. Down Millennium Maze Project and Educating the Public on Forestry
September 6-13	Annual Study Tour Romania
September 14-16	SIF Hosts Institute of Chartered Foresters (UK) Study Tour to Ireland
September 26	Field Day Cos. Wicklow & Wexford Continuous Cover and Natural Regeneration of Sitka spruce
October 8	Sean MacBride Forestry Lecture University College Dublin

Certification and Auditing for SFM Course

The Continuing Education Programme in Forestry, University College Dublin, is presenting a two-day course entitled Certification and Auditing for SFM. This is a repeat of the well-received course held in UCD last July. The presenter is again William B. Walker, the Principal Forestry Consultant of the forestry and environmental division of the Timber Research and Development Association (TRADA), UK. Representatives of the Forest Service and Coillte will again participate in the presentation of elements of the course. Topics to be addressed include:

- Background to Forest Certification Around the World
- Environmental Issues and Environmental Management Systems
- Environmental Legislation
- Auditing and Auditing Practice
- Monitoring, Verification of Practice and Auditing for Forestry
- Chain of Custody and Forest Management Certification

The course dates are April 14th and 15th and the venue is University College Dublin. The registration cost for the course is €75. Further details are available from:

Marie Doyle

Continuous Education in Forestry

Department of Crop Science, Horticulture & Forestry

Faculty of Agriculture

University College Dublin

Dublin 4

Tel: 01-7167806

e-mail: mduoye@ucd.ie

This programme is funded by the Forest Service of the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources under the National Development Plan.

Bio-diversity Components of Forestry Course

UCC's Certificate Course in Bio-diversity Components of Forestry has proved an outstanding success in its first year, and the University has now announced that the second cycle will begin next April.

Bio-diversity involves the understanding of the great variation in living organisms as well as their genetic variability and how the countless numbers of plants, animals and systems co-exist and interact to form the ecosystem. Previously, training in the assessment of bio-diversity formed part of the two-year Diploma in Field Ecology, run by the Department of Zoology, Ecology & Plant Science (ZEPS) in conjunction with the Centre for Adult and Continuing Education (CACE). However, as the commercial forestry sector enters the era of certification for forest management, feedback to ZEPS suggested a need for more specific training in bio-diversity. As a result, more than 32

people, including staff from Coillte, the Forest Service, Duchas and the private sector, completed the inaugural certification course in 2001/2002, and the indications are that participation in the new cycle, beginning in April, will be just as strong.

This year's course, in three modules, will run as follows:

- > Module 1 - Introduction to Bio-diversity and Habitats April/May 2003
- > Module 2 - Forests and the Environment September 2003
- > Module 3 - Conservation and Forest Practice April/May 2004



Participants in the First Course on Bio-diversity Components of Forestry run by University College Cork (Photo: Kevin Collins)

The course employs a wide range of teaching and learning approaches including formal lectures, field visits, practical field surveys, demonstration of sampling methods, case studies and group discussions, and also draws on the wide experience and expertise of participants, so that while there is learning in a formal sense, shared learning among those taking part, is also a valuable aspect of it. Teaching is provided by ZEPS staff as well as staff from sister departments and outside bodies, while the course is overseen by a Programme Advisory Board drawn from personnel in UCC, the public and private forestry sector and relevant Government agencies. The standard of the course is under continuous review by an external examiner - Dr Allan Watt, of the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, Banchory, Aberdeenshire, Scotland. It is intended primarily for people directly involved in forestry and woodland management activities in the private or public sector, as well as those in Government and other agencies whose work relates to the subject.

Course Co-ordinator, Dr Fidelma Butler, said "the first group, which graduated last December, found the course a valuable asset in the understanding of the principles and practices of bio-diversity assessment in forests/woodlands and in the preparation of input to forest management plans".

Further details are available from:
 Fidelma Butler, Course Co-ordinator
 Department of Zoology,
 Ecology & Plant Science
 University College Cork
 Tel: 021-4904390

Job Opportunities

As part of the Society's service to members it is planned to use the SIF website, www.societyofirishforesters.ie and The Irish Forester Newsletter as a means of advertising vacancies within the forestry sector in Ireland. Any forestry company or consultant wishing to avail of this service should contact the Sligo office. The Irish Forester is circulated to all members of the Society of Irish Foresters.

Job Vacancy

Forest Enterprises Ltd. has a vacancy for an experienced forester. Candidates interested in this position should send a CV to:

Forest Enterprises Ltd.
 3 Vesey Terrace
 Main Street, Lucan
 Co Dublin.

Closing date for applications is 4th April, 2003.

On the Move

The Society of Irish Foresters would like to congratulate Pat Farrington on his recent appointment as landscape forester with the Forest Service in the Department of Communications, Marine & Natural Resources.

Forest Service Inspectorate Change of Address

The Technical Inspectorate of the Forest Service has moved offices from Leeson Lane to:
 29-31 Adelaide Road, Dublin.
 Tel:01 6782156 Fax 01 6782169.

New Members

The SIF would like to welcome the following new members:

Technical	Associate	Student
John Paul Fahy Thomas Gerety PJ Lyons	Eileen Regan	

Recent Publications

A further four information notes in the COFORD Connects series have recently being published. These are as follows:

- *The collection, storage, treatment and handling of conifer tree seed.*
- *The collection, storage, treatment and handling of broadleaved tree seed.*
- *The importance of plant size for successful forest plantation establishment.*
- *Plant quality: what you see is not always what you get.*

Some Members Subs are Still Outstanding

Many thanks to all members who have paid their 2003 subscriptions. There are still a number of outstanding subscriptions. All members are reminded to settle their accounts with the Society immediately. Clarification of any queries can be sought from Paula Lahiff in the Sligo office (Tel. 071 64434 or email sif@eircom.net).